

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 L-03 SP-02 EB-07 SSO-00 /038 W

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7316

AMCONSUL BOMBAY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 10824

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EO 11652: NGDS

TAGS: TECH, IN

SUBJ: TARAPUR

REF: STATE 181798

1. DURING A CALL ON FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA JULY 23, DCM REVIEWED PRESENT SITUATION REGARDING TARAPUR. MEHTA WAS NOT WELL INFORMED BUT WAS DEFINITELY INTERESTED.

2. THE DCM SUMMARIZED THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE NRC HEARING SAYING THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO NEW ARGUMENTS AND THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE HAD DEFENDED ISSUANCE OF THE TARAPUR EXPORT LICENSE ON THE BASIS THAT THE US MUST MEET ITS COMMITMENTS UNDER ITS AGREEMENT WITH INDIA IF US WAS TO BE A RELIABLE SUPPLIER OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS.

2. NEXT ON THE AGENDA, THE DCM SAID, WAS THE ISSUE OF THE REPURCHASE OF IRRADIATED FUEL. IT WAS APPARENT FROM THE HEARINGS THAT AGREEMENT ON THIS WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE REACHED BEFORE AN EXPORT LICENSE MIGHT BE APPROVED. DR. SETHNA HAD ALREADY MENTIONED COMPLEXITIES ON THE INDIAN SIDE AND THERE WOULD BE SIMILAR ONES ON THE US SIDE. WE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH THE INDIANS ON HOW WE WISHED TO PROCEED.

3. THE DCM SAID THAT THERE WAS ALSO THE QUESTION RAISED

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BY THE AMBASSADOR WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF INDIA RETURN

OF THE US HEAVY WATER USED IN THE CIRUS REACTOR. MEHTA ASKED IF WE HAD A FORMAL PROPOSAL ON THIS. THE DCM REPLIED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING SPECIFIC AS YET. THE DCM WENT ON TO REPEAT THE AMBASSADOR'S EXPRESSION TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER REGARDING SAFEGUARDS FOR THE RAPP REACTORS. IF THERE WAS ANY CHANGE ON THESE, THE PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL REACTION IN THE US WOULD HAVE A HARMFUL IMPACT ON WHAT WE COULD DO TOGETHER. THE DCM MENTIONED THAT IF THERE WAS ANYTHING MEHTA COULD TELL US ABOUT GOI INTENTIONS REGARDING RAPP SAFEGUARDS THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL. HE SAID THAT BEYOND THIS, OF COURSE, ANOTHER TEST WOULD HAVE A DISASTROUS EFFECT ON US OPINION. MEHTA SEEMED TO BE GETTING ACCUSTOMED TO HEARING THIS AND TOOK IT WITHOUT ANY SIGN OF CONCERN.

4. WE JUDGE FROM THE CALM AND UNCONCERNED MANNER IN WHICH MEHTA LISTENED TO THE STATUS REPORT THAT THE GOI IS SATISFIED FOR THE PRESENT WITH THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE TARAPUR ISSUE. THE INDIANS HAVE NOW HAD AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO REACT TO OUR STATEMENTS ON RAPP SAFEGUARDS AND FURTHER TESTING AND HAVE CHOSEN TO REMAIN SILENT. IN FACT, WHEN THE CDCM REVIEWED THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S PRESENTATION BEFORE THE NRC WITH MEHTA, HE SAID HE FELT THAT THE MANNER IN WHICH THE US WAS HANDLING THIS ISSUE WAS FAR PREFERABLE TO THAT OF THE CANADIANS. NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE NO RESPONSE FROM THE INDIANS ABOUT THEIR INTENTIONS, NOR HAVE WE ASKED FOR ONE. WE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, THAT A GENTLE PROBE REGARDING THEIR POLICY ON RAPP SAFEGUARDS MIGHT BE IN ORDER. WE WILL SEE WHETHER WE GET ANY RESPONSE. WE DOUBT THAT THE GOI HAS YET MADE A DECISION ON A POLICY FOR THE FUTURE. SAXBE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS, NUCLEAR FUELS, EXPORT LICENSES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NEWDE10824
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760286-0179
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760724/aaaaavfy.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: 76 STATE 181798
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 OCT 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <08 JUN 2004 by buchant0, 3.4.X6>; RELEASED <05 OCT 2004 by vogelfj>; APPROVED <01 NOV 2004 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TARAPUR
TAGS: TECH, IN, US
To: STATE BOMBAY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006